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the tenth day she will for the first time sweep the hut, having until 585 then been waited upon by her companions, and join the other women of the house in the routine of household work. But she may not yet leave the women's part of the house and hence still remains separated from her husband. The same evening she sits down outside her hut, where she is visited by all the relatives and friends of her new family, receiving a small gift of money or kolanuts from each. This custom is called the 'buying of shame', since the bride will no longer need to feel ashamed when meeting the strangers among whom she is to live. On the twelfth day the concluding observance takes place. In the morning the bridegroom sends two fowls, one cock and one hen, to the bride's mother or, if she lives in another village, to his bride's aunt who has come with her. This woman will cook the fowls, adding various spices, and take them at midday back to the bridegroom. The hen is then sent to the bride, who will offer a small portion to her mother-in-law and eat the rest together with her companions. The cock is cut in two, the bridegroom and his best friend eating one portion, while the other is eaten by his father, alone in his hut. Afterwards the bride's companions finally depart, leaving her by herself in her new home. Now, as the Nupe put it, the 'path is open at last', that is, the marriage will be consummated the same night.

No religious significance is attributed to the observance just described, which pagans and Mohammedans alike perform; it is merely taken to express or affirm, in the manner of an obvious gesture, the new, friendly relationships which are henceforth to obtain between the husband and his wife's family, and between the bride and her in-laws. In this sense the observance represents the last step in the circuitous traditional procedure of 'tying the marriage'. That this exchange of food includes both a male and a female animal would seem to throw into relief the crucial nature of the occasion, the union of man and woman. But the fact that 812 men eat the cock and women the hen appears to harbour also a further meaning, namely, an expression of that sharp dualism of male and female which pervades the whole of Nupe philosophy.

(iii) Death

Of the three 'crises of life' death is most heavily weighted with 764 ceremonial. This seems consistent with the trend of Nupe religion, to emphasize 'ends' rather than 'beginnings'. But it does not reflect the more sinister nature of the event, doubly sinister, it might be thought among a people ignorant of after-life and knowing only the vague chance of reincarnation. For though death itself is always felt to be uncanny and disturbing, the ritual elaboration is heaviest at the death of old people, in which one